

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ALGIER 02814 01 OF 02 061230Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-05 ACDA-12 /109 W
-----106483 061238Z /12

P 061130Z NOV 77

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7488
INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ALGIERS 2814

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, AG, FR, SS
SUBJ: ALGERIAN-FRENCH RELATIONS: ANTI-FRENCH PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN;
FRENCH-POLISARIO NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN

1. SUMMARY: IN FACE OF LATEST SAHARA DEVELOPMENTS, ALGERIAN REGIME HAS BEGUN PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN OF SCOPE NOT SEEN SINCE WINTER OF 1975-76. DESPITE THIS, ALGERIAN-POLISARIO NEGOTIATIONS FOR RELEASE OF FRENCH PRISONERS HAVE BEGUN, AND FRENCH HAVE AT LEAST NOT PROFESSED THEMSELVES DISCOURAGED. GOA'S DECISION TO HEAT UP SAHARA ISSUE, AND TO CONTINUE BELABORING FRENCH, MAY STEM FROM FEAR OF FURTHER FRENCH INVOLVEMENT, AND REGIME OBJECTIVE SEEMS TO BE TO DERIVE PROPAGANDA SUCCESS FROM HIGHLY PUBLICIZED FRENCH-POLISARIO CONTACTS. NEW CAMPAIGN WILL COMPLICATE FRENCH NEGOTIATOR'S TASK, AND
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PAGE 02 ALGIER 02814 01 OF 02 061230Z

WE DO NOT EXPECT PRISONERS TO BE RELEASED QUICKLY. END SUMMARY.

2. GIRDING UP THE LOINS: IN FACE OF NEWS OF DISPATCH OF FRENCH TROOPS TO SENEGAL, ALGERIAN REGIME BEGAN MAJOR CAMPAIGN OF SENSITIZING PEOPLE TO ALLEGED THREAT REPRESENTED BY LATEST FRENCH ACTIONS. COUNCIL OF MINISTERS EXAMINED SITUATION NOV 3 AND, ACCORDING TO PRESS, "TOOK CERTAIN NUMBER OF DECISIONS." FOR ITS PART,

POLISARIO SENT MESSAGE TO OAU SECY GEN AND TO AFRICAN HEADS OF STATE APPEALING TO THEM TO ASSUME THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AND WARNING THAT FRANCE WOULD BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR CONSEQUENCES OF ITS ACTIONS.

3. FOR FIRST TIME SINCE IMMEDIATE POST-GREEN MARCH PERIOD IN WINTER OF 1975-76, ALGERIAN MASS ORGANIZATIONS, LED BY FLN, HAVE BEGUN ORGANIZING PRO POLISARIO RALLIES IN VARIOUS PARTS OF COUNTRY. OBJECT OF DEMONSTRATIONS HAS BEEN TO EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR SAHRAOUI CAUSE AND, OF COURSE, BOUMEDIENE AS WELL AS TO DENOUNCE IMPERIALISM AND ITS FRENCH AGENT. SLOGANS SHOUTED BY CROWDS ARE OFTEN SAME AS THOSE USED IN 1975-76. WE UNDERSTAND THAT WORKERS AT LNG CONSTRUCTION SITE IN SIKKDA IN NORTHEASTERN ALGERIA WERE GATHERED TOGETHER BY REGIME TO SWEAR NEW ALLEGIANCE TO THE COUNTRY. SUCH EXERCISES LIKELY TO BE REPEATED ELSEWHERE IN COMING DAYS.

4. ANTI-FRENCH MEDIA CAMPAIGN IS IN CRESCENDO. SERIES OF ARTICLES AND EDITORIALS SPEAK OF IMPERIALIST AND NEO-COLONIALIST DESIGNS ON THIRD WORLD AND NOTE THAT ALGERIA AND ITS ALGERIAN REVOLUTION ARE HIGH-PRIORITY TARGETS FOR FRANCE WHICH ACTING AS IMPERIALISM'S POLICEMAN.

5. PREDICTABLY, SENEGAL AND PRESIDENT SENGHOR GIVEN SPECIAL ATTENTION. ALGERIAN REGIME'S BETE NOIR, THE RABAT-NOUAKCHOTT-PARIS AXIS, NOW TERMED ENLARGED TO INCLUDE DAKAR, AND SENGHOR'S POSITION AS SENEGALESE CHIEF OF STATE AND VICE PRESIDENT OF SOCIALIST INTER-CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ALGIER 02814 01 OF 02 061230Z

NATIONAL IS SEEN AS PARADOXICAL GIVEN SI'S SUPPORT FOR SAHRAOUI SELF DETERMINATION. EXISTENCE OF FRENCH CAP VERT FACILITY MAKES SENEGALESE AUTHORITIES "CONSCIOUSLY OR NOT SERVANTS OF AGGRESSIVE MANEUVERS OF A FOREIGN POWER.", PRESS ASSERTS.

6. PRESS ALSO NOTES CALL BY FRENCH COMMUNIST DEPUTY BALLANGER FOR WITHDRAWAL OF FRENCH TECHNICIANS FROM MAURITANIAN COMBAT ZONES AS WELL AS CONDEMNATION OF LATEST FRENCH MOVES BY "PEACE MOVEMENT" IN PARIS.

7. FRENCH-POLISARIO TALKS: IN MIDST OF THESE FULMINATIONS, QUAI D'ORSAY CONSULAR AND ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS DIRECTOR CLAUDE CHAYET BEGAN WELL PUBLICIZED MEETINGS WITH TWO POLISARIO REPRESENTATIVES: OMAR HADRAMI (SPELLING UNCERTAIN) A MEMBER OF POLISARIO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE; AND SALEM OULD SALEK, SAHRAOUI REPUBLIC MINISTER OF INFORMATION. PRESIDENT OF ALGERIAN RED CRESCENT ALSO PRESENT AT ONE MEETING. THERE HAVE SO FAR BEEN THREE FIVE-HOUR MEETINGS WHICH FRENCH AND POLISARIO SAY HAVE NOT DEALT WITH PRISONER ISSUE. RATHER, CHAYET HAS HEARD DETAILED STATEMENT OF POLISARIO POLITICAL POSITION, AND TWO SIDES HAVE SPARRED ON WHAT PRISONERS SHOULD BE CALLED. POLISARIO HAS MOVED FROM "MERCENARIES" TO "PRISONERS OF WAR" WHILE FRENCH HAVE STUCK WITH "HOSTAGES." FRENCH EMBASSY NOTES THAT IT

TOOK FIVE MONTHS FROM TIME FIRST FRENCH-POLISARIO CONTACT ESTABLISHED FOR DIF AND SEGURO, FIRST FRENCH PRISONERS OF POLISARIO, TO BE RELEASED.

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PAGE 01 ALGIER 02814 02 OF 02 061236Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ALGIERS 2814

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

8. ACCORDING TO PRESS AND FRENCH EMBASSY, CHAYET WILL NOW RETURN TO PARIS FOR CONSULTATIONS BEFORE RESUMING NEGOTIATIONS. PRESS SAYS NEW TALKS WILL BEGIN NEXT WEEK.

9. MEDIA HAVE MAINTAINED COMPLETE SILENCE AS TO WHAT, IF ANY, ROLE JALLOUD MAY BE PLAYING IN PROCEEDINGS. JALLOUD MET WITH BOUMEDIENE ON AT LEAST TWO OCCASSIONS BEFORE LEAVING HERE NOV 2.

10. COMMENT: MAJOR MOTIVE FOR GOA'S DECISION TO TURN UP PROPAGANDA FLAME IS LEADERSHIP FEAR OF FURTHER FRENCH INVOLVMENT IN SAHARA, WITH POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECT ON ALGERIAN/POLISARIO WAR EFFORT THERE. REGIME WOULD LIKELY CONSIDER SUCH A SHIFT IN BALANCE OF FORCE AS MAJOR THREAT TO INTERESTS, COMPARABLE TO THAT POSED BY GREEN MARCH. IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, RITUALISTIC DEMONSTRATIONS BY A SUPPOSEDLY
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PAGE 02 ALGIER 02814 02 OF 02 061236Z

CONCERNED ALGERIAN PUBLIC SEEM TO BE ORDER OF DAY.

11. EVEN WHERE ALGERIAN INTERESTS NOT SO DIRECTLY INVOLVED, GOA IS HYPER-SENSITIVE TO ANY EVIDENCE OF FRENCH MUSCLE FLEXING. FRENCH AMBASSADOR HAS RECALLED FOR US VIOLENCE OF ALGERIAN REACTION TO REPORTS THAT FRANCE WOULD DISPATCH PEACE-KEEPING FORCE TO LEBANON IN SPRING OF 1976. SIMILARLY, ALGERIAN CONDEMNATION OF FRENCH ROLE IN SHABA OPERATION WAS STRONG AND EMOTIONAL.

12. ALGERIANS HAVE EVIDENTLY DECIDED TO SEEK AS MUCH SHORT-TERM PROPAGANDA MILEAGE AS POSSIBLE FROM FRENCH-POLISARIO TALKS. THERE IS RUMOR HERE THAT, WHEN CHAYET QUIETLY NEGOTIATED RELEASE OF DIF AND SEGURO LAST YEAR, FRENCH HAD AGREED, PERHAPS AS PART OF DEAL, TO SOME SORT OF FURTHER CONTACT WITH POLISARIO BUT HAD NOT ALLOWED MATTER TO BE PURSUED ONCE PRISONERS FREED. IT MAY BE THAT ALGERIANS AND POLISARIO HAVE DECIDED AGAINST TRYING TO EXTRACT LONG-TERM POLITICAL CONCESSIONS FROM FRENCH AND HAVE CONCENTRATED ON WINNING PROPAGANDA VICTORIES. PUBLICIZING OF CHAYET-POLISARIO MEETING IS FIRST SUCH SUCCESS.

13. WHATEVER ALGERIAN MOTIVATION, PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY COMPLICATE CHAYET'S TASKS. WE DOUBT HE WILL BE ABLE TO OBTAIN RELEASE OF HIS COUNTRYMEN QUICKLY. HAYNES

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROPAGANDA, FOREIGN RELATIONS, NEGOTIATIONS, PRISONERS RELEASE, SELFGOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 06-Nov-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ALGIER02814
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770410-0057
Format: TEL
From: ALGIERS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771191/aaaacztt.tel
Line Count: 197
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 94749521-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 700303
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ALGERIAN-FRENCH RELATIONS: ANTI-FRENCH PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN; FRENCH-POLISARIO NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN
TAGS: PDIP, PROP, PGOV, AG, FR, SS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/94749521-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009